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Media Release

Tuesday, January 16, 2007

Department of Justice Reaches Agreement with Hollywood Motel

The Delaware Department of Justice reached a landmark agreement with managers of the Hollywood Motel requiring them to take specific measures to combat illegal activity on their property.

The settlement is the first of its kind in a bold new statewide Drug Nuisance Abatement Initiative announced last month to target safe havens for illegal drug and prostitution activity.

"This is a clear message that safe havens for drug dealers and prostitutes will not be tolerated by this Department of Justice," Chief Deputy Attorney General Richard Gebelein said. "It is a message that will be heard up and down the State of Delaware.

"This is an interim settlement that seeks to provide immediate relief to the surrounding community and make this property less hospitable to the criminal element that thrived there."

Under the agreement, managers of the Hollywood Motel are required to:

- Employ a third-party security guard to monitor daily activities at the motel for a minimum of 60 hours each week.
- Install real-time surveillance cameras accessed via the Internet by Delaware State Police
- Construct a 6-foot fence around the perimeter of the property as well as enhance lighting on the premises.
- Comply with a "Do-Not-Rent" list of names provided by state officials.

"To the extent that these requirements are not met," Gebelein said, "the Department of Justice will take every action necessary to ensure the safety of the surrounding community, including but not limited to closing the premises and forfeiting the business license of the motel."

The Attorney General's office filed suit against the Hollywood Motel December 12, 2006, citing numerous state and county police arrests on the property for prostitution, drug distribution and possession, a homicide and various assault charges. In the last year, New Castle County and Delaware State Police have been dispatched to the motel hundreds of times. Since announcing this lawsuit, police have been dispatched only once. Seven other properties in the area were also notified that we intend to file suit against them.

The bold new initiative is a collaborative effort by the Department of Justice, Delaware State Police, State Senator David B. McBride and New Castle County Councilman George Smiley, among others.

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